

became communist, which it could have become without 57,000 Americans dying in it. We went to war presumably to preserve the oil contracts with Kuwait Inc., and now Americans are driving around with gasoline refined from Iraqi oil.

As for you "love-it-or-leave-it" blockheads, you leave it and go fight instead of sending someone else if you are such grand warriors. What I love are the people and the land, not the government.

The lives of a nation's youth are its most precious treasure, and I'm damned if I will stay silent while armchair generals propose to risk that treasure in some stupid, ignorant, corrupt or unnecessary war.

#### HEALTH CARE REFORM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. ROSS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. ROSS. Mr. Speaker, there is a lot of partisan bickering that goes on in Washington these days. Unfortunately, our constituents are often caught in between us, between the Democrats and the Republicans. They are literally caught in the ropes, strangled by our inability, especially on health care.

An issue as important as quality, affordable and accessible health care is not and should not be a political game played by the Democrats or the Republicans. It ought to be about what is best for the American people, the people who have placed their trust and confidence in us.

Over these past 19 days, I have participated in more than 60 events in my district, as many of my colleagues did during the district work period. All across Arkansas' Fourth District, my constituents told me about the health care crisis they face each and every day in their lives.

A health care issue about which I care deeply is providing a voluntary, but guaranteed prescription drug benefit as a part of Medicare. I believe it is time to modernize Medicare to include medicine. Medicare is the only health insurance plan in America that I know of that does not include medicine, yet it is the plan that nearly every single senior citizen in America relies on day in and day out to stay healthy and to get well.

Mr. Speaker, I own a pharmacy in a small town in south Arkansas, and living in a small town and working with seniors there, I know firsthand how seniors end up in the hospital running up a \$10,000 Medicare bill, or how diabetics eventually lose a leg or require perhaps as much as a half a million dollars in Medicare payments for kidney dialysis. All of these instances are real-life examples that I have seen in my hometown in the small pharmacy that I own back there that I used to work at. Every one of these could have been avoided if people had simply been able to afford their medicine or if they had been able to afford to take it properly.

I did a town hall meeting this past week in Hot Springs, Arkansas, one of the more affluent counties and cities in my district. We had more than 100 seniors at that meeting that I conducted in conjunction with the National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare. At that meeting, we said, raise your hand if you have medicine coverage. Less than 10 hands went up in that room.

This is America, and I believe we can do better than that by our seniors, and that is why I will continue to fight to truly modernize Medicare to include medicine, just like we include doctors' visits and hospital visits. It should be voluntary, but guaranteed, and it should be a part of Medicare.

That is why the first bill I introduced as a Member of the United States Congress was a bill that basically tells the politicians in Washington to keep their hands off the Social Security and Medicare Trust Funds. It is the Social Security and Medicare Off-Budget Lockbox Act of 2001, H.R. 560.

Also, during the district work period, I visited a Christian charitable medical clinic in my district, again in Hot Springs, one of the more affluent cities and counties in my district. At that facility, they literally spend millions of dollars with over 500 volunteers equaling millions of dollars in providing care for those who fall through the cracks. They only see those who live below poverty. That is all they see, people who live below poverty and yet do not qualify for Medicaid or any of the other programs. By and large, we are talking about the working uninsured, people that are trying to do the right thing, people that are trying to stay off welfare, but they are working the jobs that have no benefits.

Mr. Speaker, I relish the opportunity to fight against the unfair inequities that have created an enormous uninsured population and fight against the big drug companies who continue to price Americans out of the market. It is wrong for the big drug manufacturers to invent drugs in America, oftentimes with government-subsidized research. They are invented in America, they are made in America, and then they send them to Canada and Mexico and sell them for 10 cents on the dollar. That is wrong. That is why I am proud to be cosponsoring legislation that tells the big drug manufacturers that whatever the average price that they sell to other countries is, they have to provide that price to our seniors back in America, one of many first small steps that we must take to finally have a voluntary guaranteed Medicare prescription drug package for every single senior citizen in America.

#### APRIL IS CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION MONTH

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gen-

tleman from Mississippi (Mr. SHOWS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. SHOWS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to remind my colleagues that the month of April is Child Abuse Prevention Month. I have been heartened to see so many of my colleagues in Congress and members of my community in Mississippi wear the blue ribbons. This simple act has solidified support and raised attention across the United States to our national concern of child abuse. I am proud to join this effort.

Today I would like to commend the Southwest Mississippi Children's Advocacy Center located in McComb, Mississippi for its fine efforts towards assisting children and families victimized by abuse. This private, nonprofit center was just opened this past January under the excellent leadership of Director Ben Hess, offers a comprehensive program of services, working in conjunction with law enforcement, the court system, schools, hospitals and parents. This center is a model for the coordination of available community services.

One of the cruelest realities of child abuse is that children often feel victimized again in their experience with the criminal justice system. The Southwest Mississippi Children's Advocacy Center assists in minimizing the chaos of this experience by centralizing many necessary services at their center. Children may now have their initial interview, court school preparation, referral for medical services and therapy services all in the confines of this cheerfully decorated, child-friendly center.

The Southwest Mississippi Children's Advocacy Center is also proactive in implementing preventive programming in the 14 counties they serve. Its staff regularly visits elementary schools to teach children how to be better advocates for themselves through classes teaching communication skills, body safety, positive assertiveness and self-esteem. In addition, its positive parenting classes give parents the opportunity to learn effective ways to control anger and handle conflict.

The anger and sadness we all feel towards the insidious epidemic of child abuse has motivated the Southwest Mississippi Children's Advocacy Center into action. I am extremely proud to have such a fine center in our district, and I call on all of my colleagues to rise with me in recognition of its outstanding advocacy for children.

#### A TRIBUTE TO RICHARD AUSTIN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. KILDEE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to a pioneer in Michigan politics, Richard Austin.